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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [EAID](#) [EG](#) [IS](#)  
SUBJECT: EGYPT MONTHLY MILITARY WRAP-UP

Classified By: DCM Stuart Jones for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

#### Summary

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11. (C) Emboffs discussed border security, prospects for a secure communications agreement, plans for the 2007 Military Cooperation Committee (MCC) meetings, political release of defense systems, and BRIGHT STAR (BS) with Assistant Minister of Defense for Policy MG Al Assar, Assistant Minister of Defense for Armament MG Fouad Abd el Halim, Policy Advisor to the Director of Military Intelligence MG Fouad Arafa, Chief of the Liaison Agency with International Organizations (LAWIO) MG Nagy Kamal, and U.S. Relations Branch Chief MG Ahmed Mo'taz. The Egyptian Generals said: (1) the "only way" to improve security on the Gaza border is through additional Border Guard Forces (BGF); (2) Egypt has not determined who will participate in the BS Senior Leaders' Seminar (SLS); (3) Egypt strongly prefers to hold the MCC in November 2007 (vice spring 2008, as the USG proposed); and (4) Egypt will only consider a secure communications agreement if it differs significantly from a CISMOA. During a follow-on meeting with congressional staff members, MG Fouad abd el Halim said that with the proposed ten-year assistance plan (beginning in FY09), the U.S. would be "violating the Camp David Accords" by failing to maintain the 3/2 ratio of assistance between Israel and Egypt. He also urged Congress to "pressure the State Department" to stop blocking the political release of new defense systems that "have been approved by all other agencies and ready for funding for years." End summary.

#### Border Security

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12. (C) During an August 22 routine meeting with senior Ministry of Defense officials, OMC-Egypt Chief Maj. Gen. Collings, joined by poloff, stressed the need for Egypt to take practical steps to address Congressional concerns about border security and smuggling before the upcoming budget debates. He urged Egypt to host a NESAC Center-funded regional border security conference to demonstrate GOE leadership on this issue. Al Assar and Mo'taz both said that they had already rejected the proposal, and asked why Collings raised it again. They took exception at being asked to reconsider, complaining that the U.S. accuses Egypt of not doing enough to secure the Gaza border. If the U.S. wants to propose technical or procedural solutions, Egypt will listen, but not in the company of the Israelis and others during a conference, MG Al Assar stressed. MG Arafa said "everyone (the U.S.) supports Israel's views."

13. (C) When Collings pressed the conference proposal again,

noting that "every country has border problems, including the U.S.," Al Assar suggested that the NESAC Center host a conference to help the U.S. "Be clear," Al Assar warned, "asking Egypt to work under conditions (referring to Mr. Obey's amendment) is impossible. You have cornered us...we will not take actions to defend ourselves." Collings responded that the seminar will look at border security in general (vice Gaza), but MG Al Assar countered that Egypt's only border problem is with Gaza. Collings stated that Egypt needs to show cooperation and tangibly demonstrate how it will address the Gaza border situation. Mo'taz presented the executive summary of the white paper, urging Collings to cite it for evidence of cooperation.

¶4. (C) Al Assar said that the "only way" to address the smuggling problem is with more BGF in the applicable zone (a proposal Israel rejected). "This is a very sensitive issue (he repeated)." "We have explained this to you and Israel many times and ask you to convince Israel to let us add another 'regiment' (750 BGF) on the border." Collings said the GOE had jumped to a conclusion on the need for increased BGF without regards for other possible solutions and pressed again for the seminar. MG Fouad Abd el Halim interjected that Israel's refusal to allow the additional regiment in Zone C (and the suggestion that BGF stage in Zone B) is "unacceptable." DMI's MG Fouad Arafa said solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is critical to improving border security: "Palestinians make all the concessions and Israel makes none, which leads the Palestinians to seek weapons and ammunition." Contradicting Al Assar on the utility of a troop increase, Arafa reiterated that adding more BGF without progress on the peace process will not be effective. "The sea borders are also wide open," he added. He then complained about an IDF unit's sale of a large amount of weapons/ammunition/explosives to Palestinians in April 2007 and accused Israel of luring Sudanese refugees to Israel to empower the Sinai smuggling gangs and intensify the activity in the Sinai.

¶5. (C) Poloff asked about developments in Egyptian-Israeli liaison, ways to exploit main tunnels, and the potential for Bedouin back-lash against more vigorous counter-smuggling efforts. On liaison, MG Nagy said field commander level contact would likely stay in LAWIO channels (at the Lt. Col. level) for now, but noted that Egypt and Israel would connect a "direct phone line" between their border liaison ops centers "within days." On exploiting main tunnels, MG Arafa and MG Nagy said this is not possible now. (Note: Neither General would elaborate. End note). As for a Bedouin back-lash, MG Arafa said relations between the Bedouin and police are "very bad." Taking further steps "such as removing buildings close to the border" will take time and patience to avoid problems with the Bedouin.

BRIGHT STAR

¶6. (C) Collings said that CENTCOM Commander ADM Fallon would likely attend the SLS and noted the remote possibility that ADM Mullen would visit Egypt during BS. Al Assar said Egypt welcomes ADM Mullen's visit at any time; Egypt's representation at the SLS is unclear. (Note: MG Mo'taz had earlier said that neither the Minister of Defense Field Marshal Tantawi nor Chief of Staff LTG Samy Enan would attend the SLS; representation would be at the two-star level. End note). Collings said CENTAF Commander LTG North will raise the geodetic survey with Air Marshal Sharawi on August 25, proposing that Egypt allow the International Civil Aviation Organization to survey the airfields (as opposed to having CENTAF do the survey -- a suggestion Egypt has rejected repeatedly). Al Assar said the Air Marshal will handle this directly with LTG North.

Counterpart Visit

¶7. (C) On scheduling a counterpart visit, Al Assar said the Field Marshal's travel to the U.S. is uncertain because it

turns on political and military considerations; he urged ADM Fallon to raise the issue during his BS visit. The Chief of Staff will next visit the U.S. in 2008 in conjunction with the next MCC.

#### MCC; Secure Communications Agreement

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18. (C) Collings told the Generals that OSD would like to postpone the MCC until spring 2008 to allow time for substantive progress on agenda items and for initial discussions on shared mutual objectives. The Generals all responded that the symbolism of having an annual meeting was more important than the discussion. After significant debate, the Egyptian Generals refused to agree to take the proposal to delay to the Field Marshal, explaining that they will need justification to do so and that the Field Marshal may perceive the delay negatively. Collings stressed that a delay is not/not a negative message, but rather intended to enhance the utility of the meeting.

19. Collings warned that without progress towards signing some form of a secure communications memorandum of Agreement (such as a "Communications Security Memorandum of Agreement" (COMSEC MOA), the U.S. will remove from Egypt's list of requested defense systems any items that require a secure communications agreement. (Note: The Field Marshal would view negatively a U.S. move to cut secure communications-related systems from Egypt's wish list. End note.). Collings said that he had been trying for a year to have a discussion about a secure communications agreement, but whenever OMC's representative asks to discuss it, no one from MoD is available. Delaying the MCC would allow time to work towards such an agreement, Collings said, offering to have a U.S. contractor, who provides secure communications physical security in the region, explain the requirements to the MoD. MG Fouad asked to see a sample COMSEC MOA, noting that "if it is similar to a CISMOA, you know our position. If there is a major change, we will look at it."

#### MoD briefs Staff delegation on FMF and political release

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110. (C) During a follow-up meeting with an 18-member staff delegation on August 22, MG Fouad accused the U.S. of "violating the Camp David Accords" by failing to maintain the 3/2 ratio of assistance between Israel and Egypt with the newly announced ten-year assistance plan (beginning in FY09).

He said Egypt's Ministry of Foreign Affairs is currently considering how to address this issue. He also urged Congress to pressure "the State Department" to stop blocking the political release of new defense systems that "have been approved by all other agencies and ready for funding for years." He explained that "State" holds up "most" congressional notifications as well, such as with increment ten of the M1A1 Tank program, thereby delaying Egypt's production schedule. Delegation members did not respond.

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